

ZOOM STUDY: IMPORTANT BIBLICAL TERMS

APOSTLES

The Greek word APOSTLE (ἀπόστολος) means: a 'sent out one' – a person sent on a mission as a personal representative or delegate of a higher authority and vested with their status – “a delegate, messenger, envoy”

1.) Strictly speaking, there is a difference between a disciple ('a being taught one') and an apostle. What is the difference? What are among the qualifications of an apostle?

Mark 3:13-19 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴ He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and to have authority to drive out demons. ¹⁶ These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); ¹⁷ James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder); ¹⁸ Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Acts 2:15-17, 21-26 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) ¹⁶ and said, “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus— ¹⁷ he was one of our number and shared in this ministry. ...²¹ Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.” ²³ So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. ²⁴ Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” ²⁶ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

Acts 26:13-18 About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. ¹⁴ We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ ¹⁵ Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. ¹⁶ ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. ¹⁷ I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸ to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’”

2.) Why do we not consider ourselves apostles of Christ?

3.) Explain how the Scripture makes it clear that the Apostles were a special group of people on whom the Lord built his church.

John 16:13-15 “When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.”

John 17:14,17-18,20 “I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ...¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ...²⁰ My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message.”

Ephesians 2:19-20 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

Acts 2:42 [The post-Pentecost Christians] devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

4.) The Lord gave the Apostles the privilege and responsibility to be the foundation on which the church is built. What additional gifts and qualifications beyond those already mentioned, did the Lord give the Apostles to perform this task and validate their message?

Acts 2:43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

2 Corinthians 12:12 The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance.

Acts 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

5.) When there was a doctrinal dispute in the early church, Christians appealed to the Apostles (cf. Acts 11 and 15). How do we follow a similar practice when doctrinal disputes or questions arise among us?

6.) The Scriptures say that the Apostles were the foundation of the church with Christ as the chief cornerstone. How do we put that truth into practice in congregational life, worship, and fellowship?

7.) The Apostles were witness of the life of Christ, and especially of his resurrection. In what ways are we like them? In what ways are we dissimilar?

8.) Based on our study today, how might you respond to the following claims from the Mormon Church (LDS website):

- As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we are blessed to be led by living prophets—inspired men called to speak for the Lord, as did Moses, Isaiah, Peter, Paul, Nephi, Mormon, and other prophets of the scriptures. We sustain the President of the Church as prophet, seer, and revelator—the only person on the earth who receives revelation to guide the entire Church. We also sustain the counselors in the First Presidency and the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators.
- Like the prophets of old, prophets today testify of Jesus Christ and teach His gospel. They make known God’s will and true character. They speak boldly and clearly, denouncing sin and warning of its consequences. At times, they may be inspired to prophesy of future events for our benefit.
- We can always trust the living prophets. Their teachings reflect the will of the Lord, who declared: “What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:38.)

Closing Prayer: Christ Jesus, cornerstone of your church, we praise you for sending out your Apostles and especially for their Spirit-inspired writings. Cause us to search the Scriptures diligently, and through them give us a firm conviction of our justification, sanctification, and resurrection in you. Amen.